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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000509

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARPI AND NEA/RA (CLAWSON)
AMMAN FOR EST HUB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [MU](#) [ESTH](#)

SUBJECT: OMAN ROLLS OUT AVIAN FLU PLAN

REF: A. MUSCAT 26

[1](#)B. 05 MUSCAT 1752

Summary

[1](#)1. Oman rolled out in February its much anticipated National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan with a view toward promoting public awareness, and will conduct a series of simulations in the Dhofar region to test its effectiveness. As of April 1, Oman remains avian influenza-free, notwithstanding occasional rumors to the contrary. End Summary.

Plan Unveiled

[1](#)2. In a series of recent conversations, Econoff discussed Oman's newly adopted National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan with Dr. Salah al-Awaidy, Director of Infectious Diseases Surveillance at the Ministry of Health. Al-Awaidy commented that the plan, first unveiled in February, will serve as a basis for regional development plans and be updated every 3 months by an inter-ministerial committee consisting of officials from the Ministries of Health; Commerce and Industry; Agriculture and Fisheries; Interior; and Regional Municipalities, Environment, and Water Resources, as well as the Royal Oman Police.

[1](#)3. The plan establishes an avian influenza alert chart based on information provided by the WHO through its influenza pandemic phases and global alert level charts. It provides comprehensive information on identifying avian influenza cases, collecting, handling, and transporting specimens, interpreting laboratory investigations, isolating identified cases, and using vaccinations and antiviral agents. The plan also outlines specific protocols for airports, seaports, and poultry farms, as well as designates quarantine hospitals for each region.

[1](#)4. Al-Awaidy noted that the government is actively promoting the plan to reduce anxiety among the public. To this end, the government will conduct 'pre-informed' and 'surprise' simulations in the southern Dhofar Governorate to test its effectiveness in handling potential cases.

Avian-Flu Free

[1](#)5. Al-Awaidy also dismissed rumors that cases of avian influenza had been detected in Oman, noting on April 1 that Oman still remained avian influenza-free. He reiterated an earlier statement (ref A) that the government would be forthcoming and timely in announcing to the public any detected cases of avian influenza.
GRAPPO